

Secondary Chords

Secondary chords relate to the key of the chord which follows (key of the moment) but do not effect a modulation. For example, the secondary chords to the supertonic chord in C major come from the key of d minor. A secondary chord contains at least one chromatically altered note; the chromatically altered note is never doubled. Secondary chords usually have dominant function. Chords must be major or minor in quality to be preceded by secondary chords.

ANALYSIS

Two Roman numerals separated by a slash are used to analyze secondary chords. The first numeral shows the function and quality of the secondary chord in relation to the following chord; the second numeral shows the following chord.

C:

V/V^b V^b V/VII VII^6 $^bVII^{\circ b7}/iv$ $vii^{\circ 5}/V^b$

FIGURE 13.1. Analysis of Secondary Chords

SECONDARY DOMINANTS

Secondary dominants may be triads, dominant sevenths, or dominant sevenths with extensions (elevenths are rare). When a secondary dominant progresses to a diatonic seventh chord, the momentary leading tone (third of the chord) may descend by a half step to become the seventh.

$$V/V - V^7/V$$

The V/V or V^7/V occurs in major or minor as a chromatically altered supertonic chord. It is used in any position in major. In minor it is used in any position except second inversion.

The figure shows two systems of musical notation illustrating secondary dominants of the dominant. The first system is in F major (one flat) and the second is in B-flat major (two flats). Chord symbols are written below the notes.

System 1 (F major):

- Measure 1: V/V (F major), V (C major)
- Measure 2: V^6_5/V (F major), V (C major)
- Measure 3: V (C major), V^6_4/V^7 (F major), V^6_5 (C major), I (F major)
- Measure 4: V/V^7 (F major), V^7 (C major), I (F major)
- Measure 5: $V^7/V^\#$ (F major), V^6 (C major)

System 2 (B-flat major):

- Measure 1: $V^6/V^\#$ (B-flat major), $V^\#$ (F major)
- Measure 2: $V^4_2/V^\#$ (B-flat major), V^6 (F major)
- Measure 3: V^9/V (B-flat major), V (F major)
- Measure 4: V^{13}/V (B-flat major), V (F major)
- Measure 5: V^7/V^7 (B-flat major), V^7 (F major)
- Measure 6: I (B-flat major)

FIGURE 13.2. Secondary Dominants of the Dominant

$$V^7/IV - V/iv - V^7/iv$$

Because the V/IV is the tonic chord, the V^7/IV must be used in major to have a chromatic alteration in the tonic chord. In minor, the secondary dominant triad or dominant seventh may be used because both are altered tonic chords. These secondary dominants may be used in all positions.

Db:

V^7/IV IV V^6/IV IV V^4/IV IV^6 IV^6 V^3/IV IV V

F#:

V/iv iv V^6/iv iv V^4/iv iv^6 iv V^6/iv iv^6 $V^\#$ V^6/iv^7 iv^2 $ii^\circ 7$ $V^\#$

FIGURE 13.3. Secondary Dominants of the Subdominant

V/ii - V^7/ii

The V/ii or V^7/ii occurs in major as a chromatically altered submediant chord. It is used in all positions except second inversion.

F#:

V/ii ii V/ii ii^6 V^6/ii V^4/ii V^7/ii ii^7

FIGURE 13.4. Secondary Dominants of the Supertonic

$V/vi - V^7/vi - V^7/VI$

The V/vi or V^7/vi occurs in major as a chromatically altered mediant chord. It is used in all positions except second inversion. In minor, the secondary dominant seventh must be used so that a chromatic alteration occurs on the mediant chord (V^7/VI). V^7/VI is usable in all positions; second inversion occurs only in a descending line because it involves the subtonic scale degree.

The figure displays two musical staves illustrating secondary dominants of the submediant. The top staff is in E-flat major (key signature: two flats) and the bottom staff is in B-flat minor (key signature: three flats). Both staves show a sequence of chords in various positions, with their corresponding chord symbols written below the notes.

Top Staff (E-flat major):

- Chord 1: V/vi (E-flat major triad)
- Chord 2: vi (F major triad)
- Chord 3: V^7/vi (E-flat major seventh chord)
- Chord 4: vi (F major triad)
- Chord 5: V^6_5/vi (E-flat major triad, second inversion)
- Chord 6: vi (F major triad)
- Chord 7: V^4_2/vi (E-flat major triad, first inversion)
- Chord 8: vi^6 (F major triad, second inversion)
- Chord 9: vi (F major triad)
- Chord 10: V^6_4/vi (E-flat major triad, second inversion)
- Chord 11: vi^6 (F major triad, second inversion)
- Chord 12: ii (G major triad)

Bottom Staff (B-flat minor):

- Chord 1: V^7/VI (B-flat minor seventh chord)
- Chord 2: VI (F major triad)
- Chord 3: V^6_5/VI (B-flat minor triad, second inversion)
- Chord 4: VI (F major triad)
- Chord 5: V^4_2/VI (B-flat minor triad, first inversion)
- Chord 6: VI^6 (F major triad, second inversion)
- Chord 7: VI^6 (F major triad, second inversion)
- Chord 8: V^4_3/VI (B-flat minor triad, first inversion)
- Chord 9: VI (F major triad)
- Chord 10: V^7_4 (B-flat minor seventh chord, first inversion)

FIGURE 13.5. Secondary Dominants of the Submediant

$V/iii - V^7/iii - V/III - V^7/III$

The V/iii occurs in major as a chromatically altered leading tone chord and is used in all positions except second inversion. In a minor key the V/III and V^7/III are the subtonic triad and subtonic seventh chord. Although no alteration occurs, these chords could be analyzed as secondary dominants.

E:

d:

V/iii iii V^6_5/iii iii V^4_2/iii iii^6 V/iii^7 iii^7 V/III III V^7/III III
 (VII) (VII⁷)

FIGURE 13.6. Secondary Dominants of the Mediant

$V/VII - V^7/VII$

The V/VII or V^7/VII occurs in minor as a chromatically altered subdominant chord. It is used in all positions except second inversion.

g#:

V/VII VII V^6/VII VII V^4_2/VII VII^6

FIGURE 13.7. Secondary Dominants of the Subtonic

SECONDARY LEADING TONE CHORDS

Secondary Leading Tone chords are constructed using the key of the moment.

B^b:

$\text{vii}^{\circ}\text{b}7/\text{ii}$ ii $\text{vii}^{\circ}6/5/\text{iii}$ iii $\text{vii}^{\circ}7/\text{IV}$ IV or $\text{vii}^{\circ}\text{b}7/\text{IV}$ $\text{vii}^{\circ}6/5/\text{vi}$ vi $\text{vii}^{\circ}6/\text{V}$ V or $\text{vii}^{\circ}\text{b}7/\text{V}$

a:

$\text{vii}^{\circ}\text{b}7/\text{III}$ III $\text{vii}^{\circ}6/\text{iv}$ iv $\text{vii}^{\circ}7/\text{V}^{\#}$ $\text{V}^{\#}$ or $\text{vii}^{\circ}\text{b}7/\text{V}^{\#}$ $\text{V}^{\#}$ $\text{vii}^{\circ}\text{b}7/\text{VI}$ VI $\text{vii}^{\circ}7/\text{VII}$ VII or $\text{vii}^{\circ}\text{b}7/\text{VII}$ VII

FIGURE 13.8. Secondary Leading Tone Chords